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Roundell, Charles Savile

The progress of the
working classes during...

Skipton

[1890]

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PROGRESS OF THE WORKING CLASSES

DURING THE

REIGN OF THE QUEEN:

“A GOODLY RECORD.”

BY

CHARLES SAVILE ROUNDELL, M.A.

“This country is now far more and more worth living in, and more worthy of our affections; and we may hope that all our people may by wisdom and resolution be able to transmit to posterity advantages even greater than our ancestors have transmitted to us.”—*John Bright.*

“We will bide the coming changes, we have faith in human-kind,
In its wisdom, in its action, in its heart, and in its mind.”

SKIPTON :

EDMONDSON AND CO., GENERAL PRINTERS, HIGH-STREET.

23426D OCT 29 1959 P.J.W.

This Address, with subsequent additions, was given at Skipton, on October 28, 1889, as the first of a series of Free Lectures for the People.

It was subsequently given at Petersham, Surrey, on November 12, 1889, and at Nantwich on January 2, 1890.

I wish to call attention in particular to two notable works bearing upon the subject of this Address: that is to say, "The Progress of the Working Class, 1832-1867," by J. M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones (a little book unhappily now out of print), and "The Progress of the Working Classes in the last half century," by R. Giffen, published (1884) by George Bell & Sons, York Street, Covent Garden—price threepence.

23426D

C. S. R.

DORFOLD HALL, NANTWICH,
19TH FEBRUARY, 1890.

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THE PROGRESS OF THE WORKING CLASSES

DURING THE
REIGN OF THE QUEEN.

CONTRASTS—1837 AND 1889.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

1837.
PEACE AFTER
WAR.

Let us for a moment cast an eye upon the state of things which existed in England when the Queen came to the throne. The country was beginning to wake up, to recover itself from the exhaustion of the long war with Napoleon. Steam had been lately introduced. The first Reform Bill had been lately passed. The devastating period of War was over; the constructive period of Peace was at hand. The year of the Queen's accession may be said to have marked the transition stage between the two. The nation woke up to new activity. Every fact connected with Education, the Public Health, Crime and Punishment, Industrial Employment, Pauperism, &c., was being investigated. As Sydney Smith said, "the whole earth was in commission." And then followed that amazing outburst of activity, political, social, industrial, scientific, intellectual, and moral, which has marked the last fifty years; a movement of which the Reform Act of 1832, the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the Education Act of 1870, are the great Parliamentary landmarks; while the discoveries of Science, its application to our industrial arts, our Engineering enterprise, our Mechanical inventiveness, as well as the physical agencies of

Steam and Electricity, have gone far so to transform this old England of ours, as to have created a new order of things, and, as it were, a new world.

The change from the period of War to the period of Peace was well brought out by Lord John Russell, when he said in 1821: "Our country is now about to be distinguished for triumphs the effect of which should be to save and not to destroy. Instead of laying waste the grounds of our enemies, we may begin now to reap a more solid glory in the reform of abuses at home, and in spreading happiness through millions of our population."

They come! they come in a glorious march,
 You can hear their steam-steeds neigh,
 As they dash through skill's triumphal arch,
 Or plunge 'mid the dancing spray.
 Their bale-fires blaze in the mighty forge,
 Their life-pulse throbs in the mill,
 Their lightnings shiver the gaping gorge,
 And their thunders shake the hill.
 Ho! these are Titans of toil and trade—
 The heroes who wield no sabre;
 But mightier conquests reapeth the blade
 That is borne by the Lords of Labour.

—JAMES MACFARLAN.

LOCOMOTION. When the Queen came to the throne the Atlantic had not been crossed by a single steamship. It was not until the year 1838 that the *Savannah* first made the passage to New York, performing the voyage in 15½ days. A Steamer now crosses in less than 6 days. The Telegraph had just been practically discovered. A few years previously, that is to say, in the year 1830, five years after the opening of the Stockton and Darlington line, the Liverpool and Manchester, now the London and North Western, Railway had been opened. As many as 141 Mail coaches passed Hyde Park Corner every day on their way out of London. The Mail from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 399 miles, performed the journey in 42½ hours.

The same journey is now performed by the Euston express in 8½ hours. The ordinary Stage Coach carried 18 passengers inside and out, and travelled at the rate of 7 or 8 miles an hour. The Mail and the Coach were, however, for the wealthy classes. Poorer persons had to travel in huge lumbering waggons, or in canal-barges. An old woman, living in the village of Thornton-in-Craven, a year or two ago told how that in her youth she had travelled from Marlborough in Wiltshire to Burnley in a waggon, and that she was several weeks on the road. This brings home to us the fact that nowadays India or Australia is not more distant from England than were Wiltshire and Lancashire, one with the other, fifty or sixty years ago. In fact it puts me in mind of what a Missionary said to me when we were on our way to Madeira last year. He had his waggon on board, and he told me that when he reached Cape Town, or rather the Railway terminus at Kimberley, it would take him and his family fully three months' travel by waggon to reach their destination in Matabeleland.

It is scarcely credible that so recently as 50 years ago a Railway Tunnel should be regarded with general uneasiness. And yet a Committee of learned men, consisting of two Physicians, two Surgeons, and a Professor of Chemistry, was appointed to test the working of the Primrose Hill Tunnel, near Rugby, which had then just been completed. The Committee made the dangerous journey, and reported that "the sensation experienced was precisely that of travelling in a Coach by night between the walls of a narrow street," and that the dangers were no greater than in ordinary travelling.

When, however, the Railway was substituted for the Coach, the comfort of the poorer classes was but little regarded. They were huddled together in uncomfortable open Trucks, which were labelled "for the Working-classes only." This is the first great contrast which I wish to place before you. Recently, Mr. Giffen, the eminent Statistician of the Board of Trade, has presented a Report upon the Railways of the United Kingdom. He tells us that Third Class Passengers contribute

70·6 per cent. of the total Railway receipts. In other words, the Receipts from Third Class Passengers are three and one third times as great as those derived from First and Second Class combined.

THE TELEGRAPH AND PHOTOGRAPH. The time of the Queen's accession is, roughly speaking, the time of three great discoveries, scientific and social, which are destined to exercise an enormous influence upon the well-being, not only of the Working classes, but of the human race—I mean the discoveries of Telegraphy and Photography, and that (for I may also dignify it with the name of a discovery) of the Penny Post. For the Penny Post has been described as "perhaps the greatest social improvement brought about by legislation of modern times." I will presently speak of the Photograph and of the Penny Post. Look for a moment at the state of things which prevailed before the repeal of the Stamp Duty, and the introduction of the Penny Newspaper. Mr. Brown,* who has been Clerk at Thornton for 68 years, tells us that he can remember when "there was no Newspaper and no post. A Newspaper cost 7d., and we had to fetch our letters from Skipton." "The world was only just beginning then—in exposed his wife—we used to have to pay 8d. for a letter from Leeds to Greenberfield, near Barnoldswick"—a distance of about 30 miles. At Thornton they never heard of the battle of Waterloo until the proclamation of Peace.

* Christopher Brown has been Clerk at Thornton for about 68 years, and married 64 years. His father and grandfather were Clerks before him. He was born and reared in the house in which he and his wife still live; and had never travelled above a mile or two out of Thornton until the Rail way was made. He remembers planting trees in the Rectory garden with his father, who worked for Mr. Gee, the then Rector: and Mr. Gee coming and saying to his father, whilst he was plating: "Robert, I am glad to tell you there is Peace now." That was after Waterloo, and it was all that he had heard about the battle. He never knew anything about it whilst the war was going on; or indeed that there was a war. He says "news didn't travel fast in those days." And they had 7d. or 8d. to pay for a paper or letter. When his wife and her mother travelled from Marlborough to Tunbridge, it was in a waggon covered with canvas. They made several stoppages on the way—amongst other places at Coventry, where they were told they would be sure to see "Peeping Tom" during the night. Neither mother nor daughter slept a wink that night. They slept in the waggon, having, as Mrs. Brown expresses it, "their beds and their luggage with them." They say "that the world had been turned upside down since their young days."—Communicated by the Rev. L. B. Morris, the present Rector of Thornton.

POLICE.

The present year is the Jubilee of still another great public improvement. It was in the year 1839 that Rural districts were first empowered to create a Police force of the present type. The new Police (called "Bobbies" or "Peelers" after the creator of the force, Sir Robert Peel) had then lately been established, in place of the old "Charlies" (night-watchmen) and the Bow Street Runners. The result of the new system, accompanied as it was with notable mitigation of the severity of the law, is shown by the following facts:—Sir E. Du Cane tells us that, if in the year 1886 the law had been the same as in the year 1836, the year before the Queen's accession, there would have been in prison as many as 100,000 Convicts; whereas the number in 1886 was under 10,000. And again Mr. Redgrave, the Keeper of the Criminal Register in the Home Office, tells us that, if the offenders of the year 1841 had been tried under the laws of 1831, instead of 8 Sentences of Death there would have been 2,172. Previously to the Queen's reign the crimes of forgery, arson, and horse-stealing were punishable with death.

To come to a pleasanter subject, it was in 1837 that *Pickwick* was completed.

But *Vanity Fair* had not then been written. Nor had such universal friends as *Bradshaw*, *Punch*, or the *Illustrated London News*, as yet appeared.* It was not until 1839 that Darwin began to investigate the Origin of Species. So that, when the Queen came to the throne, the book, which has done for modern Science what the *Principia* did in the days of Newton, had not yet been heard of.

Cheap Literature, the production and reproduction of books for the people, of high quality and equally high tone—the pioneer of the Education Act of 1870, and at the same time its greatest auxiliary—may be said to have come in with the reign of the Queen. Charles Knight tells how on a March morning in 1832, when he and Matthew Davenport Hill (the brother of

* 1839, Bradshaw's Railway Guide; 1841, *Punch*; 1842, *The Illustrated London News*.

Rowland Hill, the inventor of the Penny Post,) were walking into London together from Hampstead, their talk being of the vicious cheap literature then flourishing, Hill suddenly exclaimed: "Let us see what something cheap and good will accomplish. Let us try a Penny Magazine."

Speaking here in Skipton, it will be of interest to add that in 1835 Edward Sugden, the Skipton Barber's son, became Lord Chancellor of Ireland; shortly afterwards to attain to the still higher dignity of Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain—a notable instance of the way in which in this country the highest dignities in the State are open to the humblest subject of the Queen—the principle of the *carrière ouverte aux talents* which it is one of the objects of the later educational legislation of the Queen's reign to promote.

I conclude this retrospect with notice of the fact which the selection the other day of a third Jewish Lord Mayor of the City of London invests with fresh interest—that within a few days after the accession of the Queen, a member of the Jewish persuasion, in the person of Sir Moses, then Mr. Montefiore, was for the first time selected Sheriff of London: an instance of "the expansion of the principle of Religious liberty and equality which (as Mr. Justin McCarthy has said) has been one of the most remarkable characteristics of the reign of Queen Victoria."

When the new Lord Mayor, Sir H. Isaacs, in due course presented himself to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury congratulated him upon the cessation of the "outbursts of religious bigotry," and added that "persecution for opinions" was now regarded as "a wicked and indefensible crime."

The present year is the Jubilee of the THE PENNY POST. Penny Post. That beneficent reform was the work of one man, Rowland Hill. Early in 1837, having just returned from Australia, where he had been Secretary to an Association for working out E. Gibbon Wakefield's scheme for making Colonies self-supporting in the

South Australian Colony, he published a pamphlet called "Post Office Reform," in which he advocated the Penny Rate. The pamphlet sold rapidly, and in a short time passed through several editions. The following extracts from a narrative by a daughter of Sir Rowland Hill are of interest. "Under the older system the rates of postage were so exorbitant that correspondence was practically prohibited to all but the rich. When the sons and daughters of the poor left their villages to seek work in London and other large towns, the elders frequently heard of them no more; and for lack of home influence many a young life was wrecked. 'And parted souls oft parted past recall,' in other instances than that of the poor villagers. It was 'a separation almost like that of death' to stragglers of every class—above all to those who crossed the sea as emigrants. No one sent letters such as we now write. Those of the time were written on a single sheet folded and sealed. Letter-boxes, postage stamps, and compulsory prepayment were unknown, and the postman collected the postage in money ere giving up his letters. The average inland postage was 6½d.—about the third of a working man's daily wage in the far less wealthy Britain of those days. To all but the rich and privileged the postman's knock was a sound of dread. The poorer classes either refused the offered letters, or ran into debt for them. Sometimes a visit to the pawn shop preceded the taking up of the written message, from absent relative or friend. When a man tramped the country in search of work, he was seldom heard of again till his return. Now he can drop his wife a halfpenny postcard, and when the work is found send her a money order. The money order system existed 50 years ago, but was of course little used. The older postal system was as slow as dear. A person sending a letter, say from Uxbridge to Gravesend, 40 miles distant, on Monday, could not receive an answer before Friday, the lowest charge each way being 6d. Tottenham lay 7 miles out along a well-frequented coach road; yet to make the journey thither from London, a letter required 25 hours. And lack of means of communication combined with dearness and slowness to bar

frequent interchange of thought. In England and Wales there were districts larger than Middlesex wherein the postman never set foot. Scotland and Ireland fared still worse. Cobden's works were at Sabden, a place of about 12,000 inhabitants, 28 miles from Manchester. It had no post office of any kind. The Irish living in Lancashire, said the great Free-trader, are as isolated from their brethren in Ireland as though they dwelt at the Antipodes. With such a state of things existing in the busy North, no wonder each person in England and Wales received on an average a letter once only in three months, in Scotland once in four months, in Ireland once a year. That the poor of Bristol during the agitation for penny postage should sign a petition in its favour with an enthusiasm a witness declared he never saw equalled is therefore not surprising.*

The proposals of Rowland Hill were adopted, after a searching inquiry before a Committee of the House of Commons, and were embodied in an Act of Parliament in the year 1839. The Penny Post came into operation on the 10th of January, 1840. The number of Letters now delivered in a year in the United Kingdom is 1,558 millions, or more than twenty times the number in the year before the change; the increase in the number of letters despatched and received within the last two years having been no less than 172 millions: or twice the whole number which were posted in the year 1840. The Revenue of the Post Office, which 50 years ago was under $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions, this year was nearly $11\frac{3}{4}$ millions.

It is strange to look back upon the opposition and even ridicule which his proposal excited. Even Sydney Smith, whose strong common-sense equalled his wit, talked of "this nonsense of a penny post;" whilst the Postmaster-General, Lord Lichfield, said that "of all the wild, visionary schemes I have ever heard of, it is the most extravagant." And again, if the plan were adopted, the increase of letters would be such

* Narrative by Mrs. Fellows, daughter of Sir Rowland Hill, in the *Manchester Guardian* of 10th January, 1890.

that "the walls of the Post Office would burst, the whole area on which the building stands would not be large enough to receive the Clerks and the letters."

But what said Rowland Hill himself? He confidently asserted that it would prove a beneficent power, socially, commercially, and morally, "capable of performing a distinguished part in the great work of national education."

And the verdict of history is with the Reformer. "This nineteenth century of ours has seen many good measures passed, and will see more. But penny postage, with its low rates, and its abolition of franking privileges, whereby all classes are now placed on an equality, assuredly counts second to none in being thoroughly democratic."*

But the present year is also the jubilee of the Photography. "This year" (1880), said Captain Abney at the meeting of the British Association at Newcastle, "is the jubilee of the practical introduction of Photography by Daguerre and Fox Talbot." And he goes on to say, "the discovery of the action of light on Silver Salts is one of the marvels of this century; and it is difficult to over-rate the bearing it has had on the progress of Science, more especially Physical Science. The discovery of Telegraphy took place in the present reign (1837), and two years later (1839) Photography was practically introduced. And no two discoveries have had a more marked influence on mankind." Photography, he adds, has been "called the hand-maid of Art. I venture to think it is even more so the hand-maid of Science. I have often asserted that there should be no stimulus for the study of Science to be compared to Photography."

One capital instance of its scientific use is its applicability to Astronomy. Sir Robert Ball, the Astronomer Royal for Ireland, says "the introduction of more sensitive plates is

* Narrative of Mrs. Fellows.

what has made photography of such value in Astronomy. An exposure of a second is now sufficient. But, if there is an exposure for two or three hours, we can get pictures of millions—yes, literally, millions—of stars to which the diameter of the earth must be as that of a penny 20 miles distant."

But, it may be said, what have we to do with these bewilders of the immensities of space? What is there in all this that is human, that bears upon the well-being of the working classes? My friend, the late Mr. Green, the Historian, shall answer.

"What do you look on as the greatest boon that has been conferred on the poorer classes in later years?" said a friend to me one day, after expatiating on the moral claims of Schools, Missions, Shoeblock Brigades, and a host of other philanthropic efforts for great assistance. I am afraid I sank in his estimation when I answered, '*Sixpenny Photographs.*' But anyone who knows what the worth of family affection is among the lower classes, and who has seen the array of little portraits stuck over a labourer's fireplace, still gathering together into one the '*home*' that life is always parting—the boy that has 'gone to Canada,' the girl 'out at service,' the little one with the golden hair that sleeps under the daisies, the old grandfather in the country—will perhaps feel with me that, in counteracting the tendencies, social and industrial, which every day are sapping the healthier family affections, the sixpenny photograph is doing more for the poor than all the philanthropists in the world."*

And thus what has been said of the Penny Post—that it is one of the "homeliest," as well as one of the most beneficent reforms of the present generation—may also be said of the Sixpenny Photograph. And perhaps of all the agencies of the past fifty years, none is to be compared for importance in its bearing upon the comfort, the home life, the social and domestic well-being, not to speak of the elevation of the working classes,

* *Stray Studies*, page 24, by J. H. Green.

with these three cheap and common things, the Penny Post, the Penny Newspaper, and the Sixpenny Photograph.

HOW THE BURDEN OF TAXATION HAS BEEN LESSENED IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

With Englishmen money matters are the ultimate test. Let us therefore begin with a brief retrospect of the National Debt, and its burden, in the last fifty years.

On the first of January, 1836, the National Debt amounted to £52,804,000. THE NATIONAL DEBT. On the 31st of March, 1889, it amounted to £699,302,000; the total Reduction being £153,562,000; which, at three per cent., represents a saving in the annual charge for Interest of about £4,600,000.

But this saving is in fact much larger; for in 1836 the total charge for Interest and Management was £28,880,000 per annum; while during the year ending 31st March last it was but £21,070,000: or a Reduction in the charge for Interest of £7,810,000 per annum—a reduction proportionately far greater than that in the aggregate amount of the Debt. This considerable reduction is owing chiefly to the several Conversion operations of successive Chancellors of the Exchequer; none of which, however, have equalled the splendid financial achievement of the present Chancellor, Mr. Goschen.

Thus the National Debt at the present time is under 700 millions of money. At the close of the great War, in 1816, the Debt exceeded 900 millions. Or, to put the same fact in another form, the National Debt, which in 1816 amounted to £45 per head of the then population, in 1889 amounts to a little over £18 per head of the present population.

The population of England and Wales has grown immensely since the beginning of the Queen's reign. In

1837 it was fifteen millions. It is now just short of twenty-eight millions.

Before I pass on to another aspect of the Queen's Taxes, let me mention a striking fact. A calculation has been made for the purpose of showing how each pound of the National Debt has been spent during the present century. The calculation is that there has been spent out of each pound :

	s. d.
On War and preparations for War...	16 3½
On all expenses of Civil Government	3 8½—£1.

Now look for a moment at the THE REVENUE FROM DRINK. National Revenue. In 1888 the total net Revenue of the country amounted to £91,052,948. Of this sum no less than £37,950,000 is the result of the Excise or Custom duties on Intoxicants, Licences and Tobacco. Thus a person who indulges in liquor and tobacco spends in taxation fully one-third more than his teetotal and non-smoking neighbour. While, on the other hand, those who thus swell the Liquor Revenue do much also to swell the Criminal Expenditure of the country—drink being, as has been truly said, “the greatest factor of crime, pauperism, orphanhood, prostitution, insanity, and disease.”

“But what's this Song that sad and strong, I hear a Blackbird singing :
How more than Loom and Shuttle, and more than Forge or Mine,
'Tis the Tavern and the Gin shop these millions in are bringing—
That more in Drink, than Wealth or Work, John Bull may boast to shine:
That the tap root of our Revenue lies deep in sin and sorrow,
And feeds a fruit as fatal as Java's Upas-tree.”

—PUNCH.

MEASURES MAKING FOR TEMPERANCE, THRIFT, INDEPENDENCE, SELF-DEPENDENCE, AMONGST WORKING-MEN.

Happily no figures are needed in proof of the undoubted progress that is being made towards a higher standard of temperance amongst the working classes. It was lately pointed out by the Committee of the House of Lords upon Intemperance that the higher class of artisans are becoming more temperate ; and that their example is likely to permeate through the rest of the community. I will confine myself to one single statistical fact. Taking the number of arrests for Drunkenness in the Metropolis for the years 1850 and 1888: whilst in the former year the percentage was 9·489 per 1000 of the population, in the latter year it had fallen to 4·228 per 1000; or less than one-half, being the lowest number recorded in the last sixty years.

At the same time we must not be too sanguine. According to Mr. Dawson Burns,* the national expenditure on drink in 1889 was some seven millions of money in excess over that for 1888: that is to say, some 132 millions, against 124 or 125 millions. Moreover, he argues that this increase of seven millions has come out of the pockets of the working classes ; and he attributes the increase to the revival of Trade, and the increased spending power of the people. The amount per head of the population spent upon drink in 1889 is put by Mr. Burns at £3 9s. 1d., as against £3 6s. 8d. for the previous year.

He also compares the last with the previous decade of years, to the advantage of the former; attributing the larger expenditure in the earlier period to the then prevalent commercial prosperity, especially in the years when Trade was advancing “by leaps and by bounds.”

This fact, the fact, I mean, of the apparent connexion between increased prosperity and increased drink, is one of deep national importance. And there are also reasons to fear that

* Letter to the *Times* of 11th February, 1890.

the increased consumption of beer and spirits in 1889* "would seem to indicate that a portion of the larger earnings has not been very well employed; and there are complaints that in some branches of trade the men have not been working so steadily as they did when wages were lower, and therefore not increasing their earnings so much as they might have done."†

Still, progress towards Temperance is also showing itself in the United States. In the Report made in 1887 by Mr. Edwardes, our Secretary of Legation at Washington, on the Liquor Traffic Legislation in the United States, he says that "to whatever influences it may be due, the cause of temperance has made great strides within the last year. This advance in the right direction should, I venture to think, be attributed rather to the general enormous progress made in the country than to any special legislation on the matter." And in a Supplementary Report on the same subject, which has recently (1890) been issued by the Foreign Office, Mr. Edwardes confirms his previous opinion. "There is nothing," he says, "to alter in, and little to add to, the general remarks which accompanied the last Report on this subject. . . . Legislation can certainly help certain classes of the population to be abstemious and temperate; but with the others no amount of legislation on such a subject can have any influence. As the higher orders change, so will the lower.

"The steps in the right direction which are being made, and there is no contesting the fact that they are being made, although perhaps not with that rapidity which might be desired or expected by some people, must be attributed solely to the general progress of the country. This progress will continue

* According to the latest Board of Trade Return, the consumption of Beer and Spirits was, for the nine months ending December 31st,

Spirits.	Beer.
1889—25,173,000 gallons	22,800,000 barrels.
1888—26,378,000 "	20,084,000 "

showing, for 1889 as compared with 1888, an increase of 1,795,000 gallons of Spirits, and 2,716,000 barrels of Beer.

† *The Economist*, 28th December, 1889.

at an increasing rate, and with it, I feel confident, that the cause of temperance, independent of legislation, will advance."

To my mind this observation of Mr. Edwardes is founded upon a true diagnosis of the facts, and is fraught with the best, because the most solid, hopes for the future. For it is basing our trust on the broad basis of the general tendency of things, on the general and progressive "betterment" of the times—the same general influences under which Drunkenness, as well as Duelling, have disappeared among the upper classes, within quite recent times—rather than upon mere legislation, which may or may not be rightly directed; or upon compulsion, which is a less virile motive than the moral elevation of the individual man. Or rather, let me say, it is basing our confidence upon the action of well directed legislation, backed by the sure resource of material and moral progress for the individual, and for the nation.

This in one way may be somewhat humbling to our conceit, in attributing lesser weight to the results of our own calculated action. But in another way it is fraught with hope. For it is assigning the first place to the sure influences of the general march of civilisation, the progress of the community at large—towards which each individual man can, and is in duty bound to, contribute his individual share. For, after all, as has been said, the radical solution of our social and labour problems is to be found in the improvement of the individuals who constitute Society.

From the subject of Temperance, and PAUPERISM. its correlative Intemperance, it is but a step to the subject of Thrift, and its correlative Pauperism.

On the first of January, 1889, the number of Paupers in England and Wales was 831,353; and the cost of these paupers for the year ended Lady Day, 1888, was £8,440,821, being an increase over the years 1887, and 1886.

Let it suffice to quote, and with full approval, the statement at a recent Poor Law Conference made by Mr. Albert Pell,

whose authority in Poor law matters, based upon large experience, is second to none:—"There is the fearful statement to face that there is an expenditure of nearly 8½ millions of money, confessedly in the relief of destitution."

Compare this expression of opinion with another weighty utterance bearing upon the other and brighter side of the question, namely the efforts of the Working Men to make provision against old age, and for a rainy day, through the instrumentality of their own Friendly or Benefit Societies. "There is no subject more urgent than this—that a man who has worked hard all his life, who has tried to be honest, who has tried to be thrifty, who has made sacrifices for his wife and children—there is no object which ought to be dearer to legislators, or dearer to the clergy of all denominations, or dearer to any of us, than that such a man, like every other good servant of the State, shall know that his days shall not end, as they now too often do, in the Workhouse, or in poverty."*

This leads me to take upon myself, as
ROCKS AHEAD. an ex-member of the Friendly Societies' Commission, to make an earnest appeal to the members of these admirable institutions throughout the country. And I will not blink the facts. Two facts of the first importance are brought out in a recent Blue Book containing the prescribed Returns of the Friendly Societies, and the Report thereon of the Government Actuary, Mr. Sutton. For the five years ending 1885, out of 12,848 ordinary Friendly Societies, no fewer than 5,733, or 44·6 per cent., made no Return at all as required by Parliament; while, out of the remaining 7,115 Societies from which Returns were received, only 3,174 rendered a Return for each of the five years. That is one fact. And the other is no less worthy of attention.

Friendly Societies are now required to make periodical Valuations of their assets and liabilities. The total number of these Valuations of Societies in England and Wales of which

particulars are given, is 3,472; and out of these so many as 2,705 show an estimated deficiency, amounting in the aggregate to £3,706,419; while only 767 show a surplus, the total amount of which is estimated at £834,397. What makes this statement more serious still is the further fact, stated by Mr. Sutton, that less than one fourth of the Valuations were made by public Valuers. That is to say, the greater part of the Valuations were made by persons not specially qualified for the duty. These are serious facts, calling for the serious attention of members of Friendly Societies. The guarantee of publicity, the financial safety-valve, which Parliament in its wisdom, and in its care for the best interests of working-men has specially provided, is being set at naught wholesale. As for the deficits, wherever they exist, it is the interest, as well as the bounden duty, of the members to make a strenuous resolve to make good deficiencies, either by increasing the contributions, or by reducing the benefits. I commend to the members of Friendly Societies the following grave warning of the Government Actuary:—"It is true that in a few cases praiseworthy endeavours appear to have been made to put Societies on a sound financial basis; but, on the whole, it is to be feared that the members of Societies have not thoroughly grasped the situation, and where they have done so, the older and presumably more influential members have been content to let things alone, and been successful in inducing the younger members to take the same view, the latter little thinking how bitterly they will have occasion to repent hereafter of their present disregard of the results brought out by the Valuations."

Even with regard to Building Societies, which "twelve or fifteen years ago were perhaps one of the soundest groups of business organisations in the country," the Registrar has to report a certain "unhealthiness" of condition, which he attributes mainly to the speculative character of many of the new Societies, and to the simplicity of members, in allowing themselves to be bound by Rules, which enable "a dishonest officer, by the aid of a few friends, to bid defiance to the whole body of members."

* Speech of the Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., at Newcastle-on-Tyne, May, 1889.

STILL A
'GOODLY RECORD.' Still, though there are these rocks ahead, the record of the progress of Friendly Societies is a record of the sturdy self-help, the self-dependence, the independence of Englishmen, of which as a nation we may well be proud. What the State is doing for the Germans,* English working-men are doing far better for themselves; working out their own material salvation in the only way in which in a free country it is to be found, by their own right arms, their own brains, by association one with another, without being beholden to the State for aught save a fair field, and full liberty of action.

I believe that I may say with truth that of late years Friendly Societies have made great progress; that they have been enormously strengthened by the Act of 1875: and that, whilst individual Societies have improved much, the great Orders, such as the Oddfellows and the Foresters, have improved still more.

The following is the striking testimony of a skilled foreign observer to the efficacy of our English Friendly Societies; and the judgment of foreigners is, as has been well said, that of

* The two following extracts show in effective contrast the German and the English methods:—

"By my decree of the 4th inst., you were informed that it is my desire to hear the views of the Council of State regarding those measures which are necessary for the better regulation of the condition of the working classes,

"Then, too, the further development of the State-directed industries in the direction of making them pattern examples of effective solicitude for the workmen demands the closest technical study. I rely upon the tried loyalty and devotion of the State Council in the labours which now lie before it. I do not lose sight of the fact that all the desired improvements in this domain cannot be attained by State measures alone. The labours of love, of church and school, have also a wide field for fruitful action, by which the ordinances of the law must be supported and aided; but if, with God's help, you succeed in satisfying the just interests of the labouring population by the proposals you make, your work may be sure of my kindly thanks, and of the gratitude of the nation."—*Speech of the German Emperor to the Council of State at Berlin, 14th February, 1890.*

"It cannot, I venture to say, be too constantly borne in mind that self-help and self-reliance are the only sure guarantees for social, national, and, I may add, moral progress. Legislation, which encourages the people rather to rest upon State-help than to rely upon themselves, however well-intentioned, will prove inevitably mischievous in the end; and to every measure which is brought forward with the object of improving the condition of the people, this simple test should be applied—will it tend to encourage them to rely upon self-help?"—*Speech of the Right Hon. H. Fawcett, M.P., Postmaster General, at Hackney, 14th December, 1886.*

contemporary posterity. Dr. Baernreither, a member of the Austrian House of Deputies, who spent a year or more in this country for the prosecution of his inquiries, in his recently published book on "English Associations of Working-men," writes thus: "In no country has the idea of Insurance spread as much in the working class as in England. Thanks to the numerous Friendly Societies, the conviction of the necessity of providing by way of insurance against the dangers of life, and for the time of inability to work, has spread through all working class circles, and where particularly in the last ten years the knowledge of the principles of insurance, and the will to carry them out to perfection, have increased in an extraordinary manner. . . . But we see the greatest advantage of the Friendly Societies in the social elements which it bears in itself. . . . The work which Friendly Societies carry on in this respect as free Associations cannot be highly enough valued. They perform great works of education, they enlarge working men's knowledge, they teach economy and foresight, they mix the sense of duty of the individual towards himself and his family. But they also raise the cohesion of the working class, and bind individual elements . . . into a social power, whilst founding a bond of brotherly support."

Here by right, had time allowed, I TRADES' UNIONS. ought to have dealt with the kindred subjects of Trades' Unions and the Co-operative movement. For the Trades' Unions are the result of the long and ultimately successful struggle on the part of working-men to conquer for themselves the right of free combination. Those who wish to read an exhaustive account of the long legal struggle which, in the Act of 1876, culminated in the establishment of the principle of the equality before the law in this respect of Employers and Employed, will do well to study the authoritative statement of Mr. Justice Stephen in his "History of the Criminal law of England," vol. iii. pp. 202-227. Whilst those who wish also to read an equally authoritative statement of the subject from the point of view of the

working-man, should read the recent Reports presented by Mr. Burnett, the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade, the first of which was issued in 1887.

In his Report for 1887 Mr. Burnett concludes his summary thus:—"In this way the Trade organisations of Britain have gradually achieved complete emancipation, and there can be no doubt that the freedom which in this respect they now enjoy tends to make them the most contented industrial community in the world."

And in the Report for 1888, he says: "It is also now recognised that Trade Unionism forms so strong and special a feature in the industrial life of the nation, that some record of its progress and vicissitudes should be kept in a Government department, of whose business labour statistics now form a part.

They (quotations from Reports of Trade Societies) show above all that, on the whole, the counsels of the leaders of the Trade Union movement are cautious and moderate in the extreme; that these men do not act the part of social disturbers, or industrial incendiaries, inflaming the passions of their constituents, but that, on the contrary, when they make their annual addresses, they confine themselves to remarks which are distinguished by reason and moderation. They dwell almost entirely on such points as the advantages of union to labour; on the right of the worker to some share in the wealth which is produced; to a review of the trade and chief events of the industrial year; to a summary of their Society's financial position, and to some indication of its future policy."

Besides these admirable provident institutions, these associations for thrift, set up and conducted by working-men, by themselves, and for themselves, the Post Office Savings' Banks are an instance of the way in which the State can wisely co-operate with voluntary effort in promoting habits of thrift.

A comparison of the Returns of 1881 with those of the year 1831 gives the following results:—*

	1831.	1881.
Number of Depositors.....	429,000	4,140,000
Amount of Deposits.....	£13,719,000	£80,334,000
Amount per Depositor ...	£32	£19

or an increase of ten-fold in the number of depositors, and of five-fold and more in the amount of deposits! It seems obvious from these figures that the habit and means of saving have become widely diffused in these fifty years."

Thus there is now open to the working-man, within easy reach of his house, in every town and village throughout the country, a Bank, which is beyond the reach of fraud, beyond the scope of bankruptcy, which cannot be defrauded, which cannot fail, with the credit of the Government at its back, and every penny of its deposits as safe as Consols.†

THE GROWING REFINEMENT IN THE NATIONAL TASTE—MUSIC.

Take up a Newspaper of the present day, and compare it with one at the beginning of the Queen's reign, for an index to the character of the amusements of the people. You will not find, as you would have found then, announcements of prize-fights, cock-fights, dog-fights, bull-baitings, performances of terriers backed for large sums to kill so many scores of rats within a limited time and space, public executions, drunken street riots, or any of the other Saturnalia which only 50 years ago went to "make an *English holiday*." Our neighbour, Judge Ingham, can well remember when in the time of the first

* Progress of the Working Classes in the last half century, by R. Giffen.

† It is satisfactory, after the disclosures at Macclesfield, at Cardiff, and recently at Chelsea, to hear, upon the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure for the amendment of the laws relating to Trustees' Savings' Banks. Mr. Goschen says, "We cannot endure to see the 'savings of the thriftiest classes amongst us so imperilled, as they have been imperilled in too many cases."

Lord Ribblesdale bull-baiting was an established custom at Guisburn. The bull was first baited, then killed, cut up, and given to the poor of the village. The bull-ring, fastened to the original stone, may still be seen in the Road leading out of Guisburn into Lancashire, opposite the school which has since been built.

I am well aware that, if the public taste is less brutal now, it is in some respects not less really coarse; and that evils peculiar to our own time, the products even perhaps of our advance towards a more general refinement of manners, expose our civilization at the present time to almost equal reproach. I refer to the degrading and demoralising entertainments too frequently provided for the frequenters of a certain class of Music Halls, where, as has been said, "amusement is commonly extracted from the vices and sorrows of the poor, and where the degradation of their fellows is made the subject of coarse and brutal merriment."

It is but fair to debit this black spot, typical of much else in the morals and manners of the present time, to the wrong side of the account, in the midst of the otherwise triumphant record of general progress. For of the general advance towards a higher tone, towards a higher level of moral and intellectual life among the people, there are abundant proofs:—in the Parks and Public Gardens of the present day, the holiday Excursion Trains, the Museums, the Art Collections, the Public Libraries, the courses of popular Lectures under the auspices of the Universities, and above all in the growing taste for Music.

If I take Music as typical of the growth in popular refinement, I do so, partly because of its universality, and partly because thinkers, like Mr. Herbert Spencer, forecast for Music a future beyond the aims, and even the dreams, of Musicians themselves. Music bids fair to become a part of our national system of education. Music is capable of appealing to our deepest and highest emotions. And, like the Penny Post, the Penny Newspaper, and the

Photograph, Music is one of those thrice excellent luxuries which are accessible to poor and rich alike.

MUSIC AS A
BRANCH
OF NATIONAL
EDUCATION.

Let me cite the authority of Sir John Stainer, Professor of Music at Oxford, and Government Inspector of Music and Singing at the Training Colleges in England and Wales. He says: "In Music, as in everything else, we can only 'lever up' the masses by means of our Elementary Schools—a slow process, I admit, but sure in its results. During the last five or six years the strides of Music in our Elementary Schools have been simply enormous."

"In 1888, in England and Wales alone, one and a-half million children earned a sixpenny grant by singing sweetly from memory (if not sung sweetly, the grant is lost). But two millions of our children earned one shilling each by singing school songs, and also passing an examination in reading notes and time at first sight, and in naming sounds sung to them. In 15 or 20 years (if this goes on), I believe our masses will be leavened with a taste for music, and a desire for its knowledge."

THE NATIONAL
CAPACITY
FOR MUSIC.

But it may be asked—Are we a musical people? How do we stand in aptitude, in natural capacity for Music, as compared with the most favoured nations? A friend of mine, well qualified to form a judgment, once said to me that in natural capacity for Art generally he put the English second only to the people of Italy. And with regard to the particular instance of Music, another friend, the late Mr. Theodore Walron, told me that once in conversation at Heidelberg with Madame de Bunsen, she expressed the opinion that in Musical faculty we were not second even to the Germans.

And if seriousness and depth of feeling are any criterion, let it be remembered that the greatest religious epics, in Music,

in poetry, and in prose, have all been composed for English ears, and on English soil, that is to say, "The Messiah," "Paradise Lost," and "The Pilgrim's Progress."

But I would prefer to quote extracts from the very remarkable address which was delivered in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, in 1881, by H.R.H. the late Duke of Albany, on the occasion of the institution of the Royal College of Music.

"It may not be generally known, but it is nevertheless admitted by the most learned and most hostile of our Continental critics, that in the early discovery and practice of music England was in advance of all the nations of Europe by very many years. The little round, or glee, 'Summer is a-coming in,' which is one of the choice musical treasures of the British Museum, is now accepted by the most learned antiquarians of England and Germany . . . as the work of a monk of Reading in Berkshire, in or about the year 1226. . . . We were a century and a half in advance of Flanders, Italy, or Germany. Moreover, this very early composition, instead of being grave or dull, is far more melodious and more attractive to the unlearned hearer than any music of the corresponding period in the foreign schools. In a word, this tiny glee, which is the germ of modern music—the direct and absolute progenitor of the Oratorios of Handel, the Symphonies of Beethoven, the Operas of Wagner—is a purely English creation, dealing with English sights and sounds—the cuckoo, the blooming meadow, the budding copse, the buck, the doe, the cattle, the sheep and lambs, of the pastures of Berkshire; while its music is animated in a very high degree by the truly English qualities of sense, fitness, proportion, and sweet, simple, domestic tunefulness. . . . Advance a century or two, and we shall find the same qualities still characterizing the work of the English composers of the sixteenth century. Learned they are, sober, grave, religious; in these qualities they are fully abreast of their foreign contemporaries. But in one respect they are even a long way ahead of them—viz., in spirit, rhythm, melody, practical interest, and beauty.

Their pieces are not learned compositions, intended only for learned men, but are in a 'tongue understood of the people.' The same spirit which gave us the Bible in our own tongue animated the musicians. The compositions of English writers of the 16th century . . . have a spirit, and sense, and expression which are too often wanting in the music of the Continent at the same date. So also with the madrigal writers of England. . . . Up to the 17th century, then, we can well claim to have been a musical nation. We started 150 years before any other country. Our composers did not write merely for the learned, but tunefully, sensibly, for the people at large. Their object and their delight was to be sung at the fireside, and round the family table; and they were sung and enjoyed in the family to their heart's content. But a change came. The Civil War and the Great Revolution of the 17th century, the development of commerce, and other external events of the 18th century, threw the energy of the country into other channels than Art, and especially than Music. . . ."

"Englishmen are in all essential qualities the same that they were in the 16th and 17th centuries; and I am convinced that, if proper means and methods were afforded them, they would become a musical nation in the best sense of the word. It only wants the use of the same means, and the patient expenditure of the same time that have been so successful in Germany, to enable us to rival the Germans.

"Recollect the state of things in Germany exactly 100 years ago. The same struggle was then going on in Mannheim, Dresden, and Vienna, between the native and the foreign element in music, as is now going on in London and Manchester. Mozart's great operas . . . were all Italian operas. . . . The failure of Schubert's many operas . . . was in a great measure due to the fact that they were native, and not Italian works. . . . But the national cause is always sure to triumph in the end. For look at what has happened since, and remember that the immense fabric of German dramatic music, the great national school of the theatre, . . . has all been reared in 100 years."

It was in 1857, twenty years after the Queen's accession, that the first performance of the great Handel Festival was given at the Crystal Palace. It has been said that in no other country of the world probably would a Handel Festival on a great scale be possible. It has also been said that "The Messiah" has established itself amongst us like as it were another gospel for the English people. You may remember what Handel said, when asked how he felt when he was composing the great "Hallelujah" Chorus—"Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "I felt," he replied, "as if the heaven opened, and I saw the great God."

If anybody can speak with authority on CHORAL SINGING. the subject of the capacity of our fellow countrymen, and especially of Yorkshiremen, for Choral Singing, it is Mr. August Manns, the conductor at the Handel Festival. In June last he said,—“Even within so short a period as the last ten years Choral Singing in England has improved immensely. I went to Bradford the other day, to rehearse the Leeds and Bradford choirs. They sang their parts for the Festival so admirably that I had scarcely a single remark to make in the way of criticism; and, after singing for two hours and ten minutes, they were as fresh as when they began. But, you see, Choral Singing is now a national institution in England. There is hardly a little insignificant Town in the Kingdom which has not now its Choral Society; and most of these Societies are under the guidance of good musicians. It is not so abroad. Throughout Europe generally Instrumental Music has taken the lead so much that Choral music is, comparatively speaking, but little cultivated. In France, Germany, and Italy, they have very few mixed choirs—I mean choirs composed of both sexes—which are in any way comparable to ours.”

MUSIC FOR THE PEOPLE.

The austerity of the old Puritan times is passing away. With all our devotion as a people to Religion, to Politics, and to Business, we are learning to take our pleasures less “sadly” than in the days of Froissart. Organ

recitals are common now in our Churches. Church Choirs of any pretension give periodical services of a festival character. Our Cathedrals are, as they ought to be, the homes of sacred music. Nonconformist Churches are no longer behind in their appreciation of it. At the City Temple in London there are frequent Concerts of sacred music. A large number of the various Congregations have their “Services of Song;” while at Toynbee Hall the substitution of classical instrumental music for Comic Songs and Ballads (good as these may be) is a recognition of the truth that, in providing music for the people, we need not play “to the gallery;” we need not be afraid of making our appeal to their higher, and better, and deeper feelings—in a word, that music for the people cannot be too good.

EDUCATION—FIFTY YEARS OF PROGRESS.

When first the Queen ascended the throne, Sydney Smith preached at St. Paul's a remarkable Sermon on “the duties of the Queen.” He said “let us take a short view of those duties which devolve upon the young Queen whom Providence has placed over us—what ideas she ought to form of her duties—and on what points she should endeavour to place the glories of her reign.

“First and foremost, I think, the new Queen should lend her mind to the very serious consideration of educating the people. Of the importance of this I think no reasonable doubt can exist. . . .

“A second great object which I hope will be impressed upon the mind of this Royal Lady, is a rooted horror of war—an earnest and passionate desire to keep the people in a state of profound peace. The greatest curse which can be entailed upon mankind is a state of war.”

Thus even at that time, fifty years ago, when education was at such a discount that, in the words of the 50th Report of the National Society, "it was necessary to overcome many deep-seated prejudices against the diffusion of information among the labouring classes," this sagacious man, like another and a still more distinguished dignitary of the Church (Bishop Butler*) in the middle of the last century, raised his voice in favour of the education of the people.

How far the duty of educating the people deserved the "very serious consideration" of the young Queen, and of her people, let the following extracts show:—

In the year 1838, according to statistical Returns obtained from certain agricultural and manufacturing districts, "it might be safely asserted that less than one-half of the adult population of England could write, and that less than three-fourths could read."

Out of some 2½ million children in nominal attendance at school at the time of the Duke of Newcastle's Commission (1858-1861), upwards of 860,000 were in 34,412 Private Schools. For these Private Schools "there was very little to be said. Dames' Schools were everywhere to be found. The teacher was generally an old woman, and the class room was her kitchen, often close, crowded, and dirty. Hear Mr. Cumin (one of the Assistant Commissioners)—The scholars may often be seen sitting round the sides of a four-post bed on low forms, the sides of the bed forming a back to the seat: sometimes on the sides of the bed. . . . I have seen the children as closely packed as birds in a nest, and tumbling over each other like puppies in a kennel."[†]

In the Potteries, about the year 1838, more than three-fourths of the population could neither read nor write. In Darlaston, near Wolverhampton, there were 1000 men who

* Sermon preached in the year 1745, at the annual meeting of the Charity Children at Christ Church, London, by Bishop Butler, a sermon which according to the late Mr. Matthew Arnold, "every one concerned with popular education ought to read."

† Reminiscences of William Rogers, p. 141.

could not tell you what their own names were, being known only by nicknames. Of a class of girl-workers in Wolverhampton known as "Bank-girls," it was said, "they drive coal-carts, ride astride upon horses, drink, swear, fight, smoke, whistle, and care for nobody." Of the West of Scotland it was said, "a large proportion of the Colliery and Ironwork hands are living in an utterly depraved state, a moral degradation which is entailing misery and disease on themselves, and disorder on the community." From Yorkshire, Lancashire, and other districts, similar evidence was forthcoming. In the town of Oldham, in the time before the Reform Bill, it was a common practice for men to run races through the streets naked; and in another large town it was found that less than one hundred, out of the whole number of children of school age there, were at school. Of the parents in the pauperized rural counties of the South of England Sir James Shuttleworth said: "they were largely dependent on the poor-rate. There were few or no schools. The population was ignorant and demoralized; it had the craft of the pauper, or of the pensioner on parochial doles, of the poacher, and squatter on the common."

Well might Lord Ashley (afterwards Lord Shaftesbury) say in the House of Commons: "No one who has heard these statements, and believes them, can hope that twenty more years will pass without some mighty convulsion, some displacement of the whole system of society." And yet the foundation of our present system of national education was not laid without much opposition, much difficulty.

In the year 1833, at the instance of Lord Brougham, Parliament had made a grant of £20,000 per annum between the two great Societies, the British and Foreign School Society, and the National Society. In 1839, two years after the Queen's accession, the Parliamentary grant was raised to £30,000 per annum, under the superintendence of a Committee of the Privy Council which was then constituted, and subject to a new system of inspection by competent persons. This was in fact the first institution of our present system of National

Elementary Education, of which the true founder was Sir James Kay Shuttleworth. The proposal was contained in a letter addressed by Lord John Russell to Lord Lansdowne, which was laid upon the table of the House of Commons. Upon a division in Committee of Supply the grant of £30,000 was carried by a majority of only two. In the House of Lords, a resolution condemnatory of the scheme, on the motion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, was as a matter of course carried by a majority of 111. A deputation from the House of Lords proceeded to Buckingham Palace, headed, it is said, by the Archbishop, to ask the Queen to suspend the grant made by the House of Commons. In reply the Queen "duly appreciated their zeal for the interests of Religion, and their care for the Established Church; but at the same time could not help expressing her regret that they should have thought it necessary to take such a step."

And thus a large minority of the House of Commons, a large majority of the House of Lords, and the Clergy* of the Established Church, resisted the beginning of a most beneficent reform, in the face of a state of things which had been publicly proclaimed to be disgraceful to our civilization, and even provocative, as Lord Ashley said, of a political convulsion.

Let me pause for a moment while I place before you two instructive phases in the onward movement of the cause of national education: instances of official obtuseness on the one hand, and of the quick and sure advance in public opinion on the other.

In a letter to Lord John Russell, dated November 27, 1838, Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, says "we talked much yesterday of measures, and particularly of education. The general opinion was that that question could not be escaped nor deferred; that our relations with respect to it must be declared at the very commencement of the session. Upon the question itself I differ. . . I am against it. I think education at present stands in

* The Bishop of London (Blomfield) was an honourable exception.

England upon a better ground than any new one upon which you will place it. I am convinced that if you attempt a combined system" (meaning a Government grant supplementary to local contributions) "you will fail; but I have no objection to yield my opinion and try. But, before you declare that you intend to propose a plan, you must have a practical plan prepared. It appears to us all, therefore, that the sooner you mature your views upon this subject and reduce them to writing, so that they may be submitted to some members of the Cabinet, the better."†

That was just before the institution of the existing national system. And a little later, speaking of the Report of the Duke of Newcastle's Commission on elementary education, one of its members, the Rev. William Rogers, of Bishopsgate, says that at that time (1861) "the very stones would have cried out at the mention of national education, universal, compulsory, free."‡

Such is the progress which we have achieved. And such is the augury of further progress for the future.

But the work was done. "Such," says the biographer of Lord J. Russell, "were the first beginnings of the great work which, gradually extended from year to year, led, thirty years afterwards (1870), to arrangements for the compulsory education of all British people."‡

Let me now put before you a few facts showing the growth of this "grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field."

The grant of £30,000 per annum, but "a small fraction of the revenue of one day in the largest empire of the world," as Carlyle contemptuously put it, has grown until in the year 1888 it reached the total of £3,166,110—in addition to a sum of over a million raised by local Rates—a vast sum indeed, which

* Lord Melbourne's Papers, p. 384.
† Reminiscences of William Rogers, p. 154.

‡ Life of Lord J. Russell, I., 330.

yet people may be found short sighted enough, narrow sighted enough, insane enough, to raise pettifogging, cheeseparing objections to. And yet what, in fact, is this expenditure but a wise and saving contribution to a grand National Provident Insurance against Intemperance, Pauperism, and Crime?

We spend 26 millions a year by way of Interest on the National Debt, a debt largely caused by wars and rumours of wars. We spend a round sum of 30 millions a year by way of duties on intoxicating liquors—and yet forsooth we are to grudge this expenditure on Education, upon which our best hopes for the moral, social, intellectual, aye and material, well-being and progress of the people depend.

But again, take the number of children in average attendance in our schools. Lord Aberdare has told us that when he was Vice-President of the Council in 1864-5, shortly before the passing of Mr. Forster's Act, the number of children so in attendance was less than a million, namely about 850,000; whilst now they have more than quadrupled.

In 1870, the year of Mr. Forster's Act, the total number in average attendance in England and Wales was 1,152,389. In 1888, the number was 3,633,094; or an increase over 1870 of 2,480,705; or more than treble the whole number in attendance in the former year.

But it may be said, "how about the moral results?" If there is one class of cases which causes distress and difficulty to those of us who act as Magistrates, it is the class of juvenile offenders. This, then, is what Sir W. Hart Dyke, the present Vice-President of the Council, told us when introducing the Education Estimates for 1888. He asked the House of Commons to consider the bearing of the Education Acts upon the "child-life" of the poorer classes—with this remarkable result, that within the last twenty years the committals of juvenile offenders, of children under 12 years of age, had been reduced from ten per cent. of the whole number to *one* per cent! Well might Sir W. Hart Dyke call this "a goodly record."

THE
DEVELOPMENTS
OF EDUCATIONAL
REFORM.

The reign of the Queen has witnessed a transformation of our whole system of education from the highest to the lowest. In her reign the Universities have been reformed. Through the abolition of religious tests and disabilities, the benefits of the ancient national seats of learning have been thrown open to the nation—a boon of unspeakable importance to the whole body of Nonconformists, of unspeakable importance also to the whole body of working men. For the Universities are the highest rung of the educational ladder, which now enables any boy of marked ability to rise from the elementary school to the highest positions in the country. The Public Schools, the Endowed Grammar Schools, the Elementary Schools, have all been reformed and reconstituted. The higher education of girls, of which you in Skipton have so recently had a practical illustration in the opening of the Endowed School for Girls, is now an established part of our educational system. Whilst this last Session has seen two new departures in the passage, not only of a measure of Intermediate Education for Wales, but also of the Technical Instruction Act for England, which is in fact a recognition by the State of the necessity for a secondary and a scientific system of national education.

"When I see the village school, and the tattered scholars, and the aged master or mistress teaching the mechanical art of reading or writing, and thinking that they are teaching that alone, I feel that the aged instructor is protecting life, insuring property, fencing the altar, guarding the throne, giving space and liberty to all the fine powers of man, and lifting him up to his own place in the order of Creation."* Such is Sydney Smith's testimony to the importance of national education.

* Sermon on the duties of the Queen.—Sydney Smith's Works, III., 298.

THE RISE IN WAGES IN THE LAST FIFTY
YEARS.

The question of wages is a vital part of any inquiry concerning the progress of the Working classes. If I lay before you facts relating to the scale of wages in Craven fifty years ago, I do so, partly because of their special local interest: but chiefly because they are thoroughly trustworthy; the figures having been extracted for me by Mr. Thomas Varley from books kept at the time by his father.

At that period Masons were receiving
WAGES 3s. 4d. a day, working from 7 a.m. till
IN CRAVEN. 6 p.m., with one hour for dinner; except
on Saturdays, when work ended at 5
p.m. The number of working hours in the week was thus
59, and the rate of payment about 4d. per hour.

Now Masons are receiving 4s. 6d. a day, working from 7 a.m. till 5.30 p.m., with half-an-hour for breakfast, and one hour for dinner; except on Saturdays, when work stops at 12 noon. The number of working hours in the week is 49½, and the rate of payment a little over 6½d. per hour.

At that time Labourers were receiving from 1s. 9d. to 2s. a day, working the same number of hours; the rate of payment being about 2½d. per hour.

Now Labourers are receiving from 3s. to 3s. 6d. a day, working 49½ hours in the week, their rate of payment being from about 4½d. to 5d. per hour.

Thus Mason's wages have increased about 62 per cent., whilst Labourer's wages may be said to have doubled in the last fifty years. Not only so, but the hours of labour have been reduced from 59 to 49½; added to which, owing perhaps to the greater severity of the winters then, Masons and out-door Labourers were liable at that time to be thrown out of work for weeks together, and to have recourse to hand-loom weaving, &c.

FALL IN PRICE
OF ARTICLES
OF FOOD.

But the improvement in their condition does not stop here. Whilst wages have increased, the prices of commodities, necessities of life, and comforts almost equal to necessities, have largely decreased.

Thus flour, which was then 2d. per lb., is now 1½d.
Bread, which was then 6d. the quartern loaf, is now 4d.
Tea, which was then 5s. 4d. per lb., is now 2s. per lb.
Sugar, which was then 7d. per lb., is now 2d. per lb.

This is again, "a goodly record."

MR. GIFFEN'S
TESTIMONY.

But upon this subject of wages, and upon the general question of the general progress of the working classes, I would prefer to quote the high authority of Mr. Giffen.*

Mr. Giffen speaks of the "enormous apparent rise in money wages, ranging from 20, and in most cases from 50, to 100 per cent. . . . The workman gets from 50 to 100 per cent. more money, for 20 per cent. less work (*i.e.*, in shortened hours of labour); in round figures he has gained from 70 to 120 per cent. in fifty years in money return. . . . While his wages have advanced, most articles he consumes have rather diminished in price, the change in wheat being especially remarkable, and significant of a complete revolution in the condition of the wages. The increased price in the case of one or two articles—particularly meat and house-rent—is insufficient to neutralise the general advantages which the workman has gained."

He sums up the whole case as follows: "It has been shown directly, I believe, that, while the individual incomes of the working classes have largely increased, the prices of the main articles of their consumption have rather declined; and the inference as to their being much better off which would be drawn from these facts is fully supported by statistics showing

* "The Progress of the Working Classes in the last half Century," by R. Giffen, published in 1884 by George Bell and Sons, York Street, Covent Garden—price threepence.

a decline in the rate of mortality*, an increase of the consumption of articles in general use, an improvement in general education, a diminution of crime and pauperism, a vast increase of the number of depositors in saving banks, and other evidences of general well-being." . . . "The moral is a very obvious one. Whatever may be said as to the ideal perfection, or imperfection of the present economic *régime*, the fact of so great an advance having been possible for the masses of the people in the last half-century is encouraging. . . . Surely the lesson is that the nation ought to go on improving on the same lines, relaxing none of the efforts which have been so successful. Steady progress in the direction maintained for the last fifty years must soon make the English people vastly superior to what they are now."

THE CONDITION OF WORK-PEOPLE IN CRAVEN,
ESPECIALLY IN SKIPTON, ON THE EVE OF
THE REPEAL OF THE CORN-LAWS.

Working people now-a-days scarcely realize the state of things which existed previous to the Repeal of the Corn-laws in the year 1846.† I have myself heard elderly men speak with deep feeling of those times: how that in the West Riding villages they carried on their industry with hand looms, in their own cottages, lighted, not by gas, but by the flickering light of a tallow candle; and how too often, when trade was bad, or corn was high, they were 'welly cleann'd.'‡ I have been enabled, however, to refer to a document, compiled in 1843, which gives a detailed account of the condition of working people in Skipton at that date. And this description is no doubt typical of the state of things then existing in other towns and villages of the West Riding. The population of Skipton,

* Mr. C. Butler, in his Speech on the Ten Hours Factory Bill, in 1844, stated that in Manchester the average duration of life was only seventeen years. It is stated that within the last 15 or 20 years there has been (mainly owing to improved sanitary conditions) a remarkable decrease in the general rate of mortality, resulting in an addition of an average of two years to the life of males, and of three-and-a-half years to the life of females.

† See the grim story told in the Appendix.

‡ Well-nigh starved.

which is now about 13,000, was then 4,842. There were but six mills, finding employment for 605 workers. Hand loom weaving was the principal means of employment.

The document in question, which is dated 16th February, 1843, is a carefully compiled account of the domestic condition of the families of the working people in the town, the result of a house-to-house investigation. The general conclusion arrived at is expressed in the following words: "We the undersigned beg leave to remark that a general destitution of clothes and bedding pervades the working part of the community, particularly a class in some degree better circumstanced as regards wages than those we have enumerated."

To take one section of the inquiry, which comprised 424 families, the following particulars are given:—

No. of families.	Individuals.	Weekly earnings, Clubs & Parish Relief.			Average individual weekly Income.	
		£	s.	d.	s.	d.
424	1781	167	12	0	1	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Partially employed					582	
Unemployed above 9 years of age					435	
Children under 9 years of age, and women whose family occupies their whole time.....					764	
Total.....					1,781	

In the Factories, the highest recorded weekly wage of an operative was 15s. But this was exceptional; the average wage being 5s., 6s., or 7s. a week. Masons and Labourers averaged about 8s. a week. Joiners, Smiths, and Mechanics, who were among the best paid workers, averaged from 15s. to 18s.; the highest recorded wage being 19s. 6d. Shoemakers earned from 5s. to 12s. a week. Four shillings a week are the highest wage earned by females, who were chiefly washer-women or charwomen. All the Bakers, however, were women, earning from 2s. to 4s. 6d. a week. A young woman of 18 was then earning 2s. in the week as a dressmaker, and one aged 27 was earning 4s.

At the present time, we are told by those who have the requisite local knowledge, "from the great changes, due in no small degree to wise legislation, households now accounted amongst the comfortable, if not well-to-do, have been built up by those who 40 years ago were amongst the many who suffered from want of adequate and nutritious food, and comfortable clothing."

I conclude this specially local part of the subject with the quotation of a few of the detailed descriptions of the recorded cases, in order to bring out more clearly the general poverty, and the hardships suffered by the working people, through the scarcity of employment, or the low rate of wages, and the high price of provisions—adverse circumstances, which in the main were owing to mischievous legislation.

No. 72. Father, mother, and seven children; father only getting two shillings a week as a labourer; one of his sons, aged 28, a mason, 4s. 6d., fifteen shillings being the total income of the whole family of nine. "Very poor bedding, only two old blankets covered with cotton clouts. Two without clogs."

No. 74. Father, mother, and three children, the total income of the family of five being 5s., which was earned by the father as a labourer. "Bedding very bad, a few shavings in an old wrapper for a bed; nothing but two old blankets and an old coverlet to cover them from the cold. He has been five weeks out of work, and only had two shillings from the parish."

No. 87. Father, mother, and six children (ranging from one to 12 years of age); one working only, and he bringing in a shilling a week, the total income of the family of eight being 8s. "Beds in a bad state. No blankets in the house for last three years; one quilt for all. Four children without clogs. Their clothes are very bad."

No. 265. Father, mother, and eight children. "A most shocking case. Only two beds for the whole family often, and

these also poor; only three old sheets, and no blankets, in the house; the children almost without clothing, being in nothing but rags."

THE REPEAL OF THE CORN-LAWS.

These harrowing details, be it remembered, give a realistic picture of the condition of a large portion of the working classes in the year 1843, six years after the Queen had come to the throne, and three years before deliverance came in the shape of the Repeal of the obnoxious Corn-laws. And yet, several years after that great Reform, which has done more perhaps than any other measure for the working classes, and for the advancement of the common weal, I can myself remember to have heard fall from the lips of a person very high in rank the expression—"we shall never get over the apostasy of Peel."

But for my part I prefer to present the "apostasy" of Sir Robert Peel from a different point of view,—from the point of view of the toiling millions, to whom bread is literally the staff of life.

Fifty years ago the fluctuations in the price of wheat were disastrous. Statisticians may with great equanimity strike an average. But averages, which are the stock in trade of the statistician may mean starvation to the poor man and his family. It would have been small consolation to a poor working man in 1838, when wheat touched 78s. the quarter, to have been reminded that two years previously it had stood so low as 36s. And so it was. Though in 1836 wheat touched 36s. the quarter, yet in 1838, 1839, 1840, and 1841 it touched 78s., 81s. 6d., 72s. 10d., and 76s. respectively; in each case double the price of the lowest year. And in 1847, it reached the sum of 102s. 5d. the quarter, or nearly three times the price of the lowest year. But since the

Repeal of the Corn-laws there has been "a steadily low price, which must have been an immense boon to the masses, and especially to the poorest."*

Let me ask you to put together A TIMELY REFORM, three brief dates: 1846, the year of the Repeal of the Corn-laws; 1847, wheat at a famine price; 1848, the year of the French Revolution, when thrones on the Continent were tottering to their base. But the English throne stood firm,—because English Statesmen had been wise in their generation, had set their house in order, had put a timely end to an unjust monopoly, in deference to the dictates of justice and of right. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock."

YOU may remember perhaps the touching and pathetic story, told by Mr. Bright himself, of his call to the great work by which his name will live in English history.

"I was in Leamington, and Mr. Cobden called on me. I was then in the depths of grief—I may almost say of despair—for the light and sunshine of my house had been extinguished. All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life, and a too brief happiness, was lying still and cold in the chamber above us. Mr. Cobden called on me as my friend, and addressed me, as you may suppose, with words of condolence. After a time he looked up and said: 'There are thousands and thousands of homes in England at this moment where wives, and mothers, and children are dying of hunger. Now, when the first paroxysm of your grief is passed, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest until the Corn-laws are repealed.'"

* Giffen—*Progress, &c.*, p. 10.

† Justin McCarthy's "History of Our Own Times," I. 344.

THE CHANGED ATTITUDE OF PARLIAMENT, AND OF SOCIETY, TOWARDS THE WORKING CLASSES.

If asked to what agency in particular this vast improvement in the condition of the working classes seems mainly attributable, I should unhesitatingly answer—"the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the establishment of Free Trade." In fact the four great Parliamentary measures to which the progress of the working classes is mainly owing, may be said to be

1. The Repeal of the Combination Laws—"the turning point in the history of the English working class"—in 1824, completed in 1875; Associations of Employers, and Associations of Workmen, standing now in a position of perfect equality in the eye of the law;
2. The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, &c.;
3. The Repeal of the Corn Laws, 1846; and
4. The Education Act of 1870.

These four measures (omitting here, but not forgetting, such agencies as the progress of Scientific discovery, Steam and the like) have done more than aught else for the political, industrial, material, social and moral elevation of the body of the people.

And we see the results of these beneficent measures in the social upheaval of the working classes, in the altered attitude of society towards working men. Machinery is robbing labour of any sense of degradation. Men are no longer treated like beasts of burden. Where not many years ago men stripped themselves to the waist to hammer boiler plates into shape, they have now, with a higher intelligence, to control the motions of a piece of mechanism. Women are no longer unsexed by horse-work.* Such an appeal as was made some 50

* "Among the Miners I (that is to say, a correspondent writing from Leeds in 1867) know women yet who worked naked in the Pits, in places worse considerably than where the Ponies now pull the corves."—*Progress of the Working Classes, 1832-1867*, by J. M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones.

years ago by an old Scotchwoman to one of the Commissioners of inquiry into the employment of children in mines and collieries would nowadays be impossible—"You must just tell the Queen Victoria that we are quiet, loyal subjects. Women-people here don't mind work; but they object to horse-work; and that she would have the blessings of all the Scotch Coal-women, if she would get them out of the Pits, and send them to other labour."

The principal Governments in Europe, with the exception of Russia, have just accepted the invitation of the German Government to an International Conference, to be held at Berlin, on the subject of questions affecting labour.

Parliament is occupying itself more and more with working-class measures. "Since 1866 no fewer than twenty distinct Acts of Parliament directly affecting Labour have been passed; and last Session (1889) they were able to add another with a view to protecting the health of the workpeople while engaged in the Mills."^{*} A new Department, the Labour Department, has been instituted in the Board of Trade; while amongst the more recent inquiries of importance which have been set on foot, there have been the Royal Commissions relating to the Housing of the Poor, the Unemployed, the Sweating System, the Ventilation of Workshops and Factories.

Working men are being admitted even within the sacred pale of Administration and Government. Working men have been appointed to Inspectorships of Factories. Working men have been placed upon the Commission of the Peace; have been made Members of Royal Commissions; are elected Members of Parliament, and have the ear and the respect of the House of Commons. One of their number, Mr. Burnett, holds the new post of Labour Correspondent in the Board of Trade; while another, the Secretary to the Trades Unions, Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., was lately chosen to fill the office of Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Home Office.

* Address of Mr. Holmes, President of the Northern Counties' Amalgamated Weavers' Association at Nelson, October, 1889.

Class interests are less sharply divided. As we know one another better, we respect each other more. There is a growing spirit of sympathy between class and class.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell."

Any Socialistic idea of equality is foreign to the mind of the English working man. Inequalities there must needs be. The only equality the Englishman cares for is equality before the law. Nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the spirit of Chartism* which prevailed at the beginning of the Queen's reign, and the almost universal spirit of loyalty which prevails now.

Still, though throughout the long reign of the Queen there has been progress, stupendous, unexampled progress, all along the line, still we believe, and feel assured, that the progress of the race, the progress of our nation, is as yet but in its infancy.

It was towards the close of his honoured life that a great Englishman, John Bright, used these memorable words:—

"THIS COUNTRY IS NOW FAR MORE AND MORE WORTH LIVING IN, AND MORE WORTHY OF OUR AFFECTIONS. AND WE MAY HOPE THAT ALL OUR PEOPLE MAY BY WISDOM AND RESOLUTION BE ABLE TO TRANSMIT TO POSTERITY ADVANTAGES EVEN GREATER THAN OUR ANCESTORS HAVE TRANSMITTED TO US."

* John Frost, the Chartist, was tried at Monmouth for High Treason in 1839.

APPENDIX.

THE EVE OF THE REPEAL OF THE CORN-LAWS.

The following account of the state of things existing, on the eve of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, in a Mining Village in the West Riding, has been recently given to me, 'as the impression made upon a retentive memory, which has never been obliterated':—"I remember well living at Greenhowhill, a village some three miles west of Pateley Bridge, during the years 1846-52, where the inhabitants chiefly are miners. Some few of them had their 'three acres and a cow,' which provided them with milk and a little butter; but the bulk of them were simply cottagers. Flour was 5s. per stone, and many other articles were very much higher in price than they are to-day. Many of these miners have been known to set out for the day's toil after breakfasting off dry bread and coffee, guiltless of both sugar and milk; and after working the usual 'shift' under-ground or on the 'dressing' floors, they have returned to 'dine' off the same fare, with a similar provision for tea and supper. If varied at all, the meal would consist of 'skimmed' milk, two or three 'meals' old, made into porridge. 'Flesh meat,' as it was termed, was out of the question, and never seen except at feast-time, when most of them would contrive to get a joint of roast beef. During the winter preceding the repeal of the Corn Laws, owing to the failure in the potato crop, it was remarked that only at the Village Inn was such a thing to be seen, and these had been paid for at the rate of 18s. the half pack.* Indeed, though I was living at the time under the hospitable roof of a man who farmed his own land, we had only half a pack of potatoes during the whole winter—peas and 'stirabout,' a mixture of oatmeal and bacon fat and milk made in the frying pan, formed the usual fare for dinner day by day. It is a very remarkable fact, and very suggestive of the improvement which has taken place in the conditions of life, that though the mines have since then become poorer,

the villagers can now find work for a resident butcher; but in the days of the Corn Laws such a person could only be found in the neighbouring town of Pateley Bridge. Soon after the Repeal of the Bread Tax, flour began to be imported from America at a considerable reduction in price, and many were the criticisms passed upon it, though most of the critics agreed as to its wholesomeness and as to its tasting pretty much like English flour, while at the same time they said it was 'blaker' (yellower) than English flour; but the reduction in price was its principal commendation.

"The spirit of discontent which ran as an under-current among the working classes, even found its way to that remote and out-of-the-way place; and often have I listened with a feeling of horror, as I heard some friend telling my grandfather how that it had been arranged to murder Mr. _____, the corn miller, as he came from the market, and that his grave had actually been dug for him on Pateley Moor. Such was the feeling of the people that the 'badgers' (*i.e.*, corn millers) were responsible for the high price of bread stuffs.

"I also remember that many disquieting rumours found their way from Bradford as to what the Chartists were going to do towards bringing about a better (?) state of things. Spikes, guns, and other implements of destruction were being provided, for the purpose of a *coup de main*, which was to replace the misery and poverty of the period with an era of comfort and plenty. Of course, we all know that Chartist turned out a miserable and discredited *fiasco*; but the blessings which followed the legislation of that heaven-sent Minister, Sir Robert Peel, secured for our country greater benefits than were ever dreamed of in the Chartist's programme."

* A pack of potatoes is 240 lbs., or 17 st. 2 lb. Potatoes are now being bought at 2s. 9d. per bag of nine stones. So that in 1846 potatoes were about six times the price at which they now are.

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**END OF
TITLE**